THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) The revitalization of the agriculture sector, the improvement in its production and productivity, and enhancement of the income of the farmers are some of the major thrust areas identified by the Government for focused and concerted action. A number of programmes are under implementation which aim to achieve this objective. Some of the more prominent initiatives taken recently are launching of the National Horticulture Mission as a part of agricultural diversification to high value crops and to assure nutritional security and income support to farm households, the scheme relating to micro irrigation for efficient use of water which is of particular benefit in the dry land and rainfed areas, establishment of National Rainfed Area Authority of India for promoting sustainable agricultural development in dry land and rainfed areas, strengthening of extension support system for dissemination of developing technologies at the farm gate, liberalization and strengthening of marketing infrastructure, improvement in supply of quality inputs, etc. It is also the endeavour of the Government to promote public-private partnership in the agriculture sector in various areas like agricultural extension, input supply and marketing support. A comprehensive Credit Policy to enhance credit flow to agriculture has been announced by the Government in June, 2004. The Policy *inter-alia* aims to double flow of credit to agriculture in next three years, debt restructuring of outstanding loan for farmers in distress, special one time settlement scheme, credit to redeem loan from private money lenders, refinement of Kisan Credit Card Scheme. Different States and Union Territories are advised from time to time for effective implementation of these schemes for development of agriculture.

National Welfare Scheme for Fishermen in Kerala

1979. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the centrally-sponsored scheme, National Welfare Scheme for Fishermen had been implemented in Kerala and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this 50 per cent centrally assisted

programme though implemented in 1991-92, the Central Government has not yet paid to the State Government completely its share in the expenditure;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) how and when this problem would be resolved and the assistance would be given what is due to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The National Welfare Scheme of Fishermen comprising of following components is in operation during the 10th Plan in the States/UTs including Kerala:

- Development of Model Fishermen Villages i.e. construction of fishermen houses, community hall and installation of tube wells for drinking water.
- Saving-cum Relief.
- Group Accident Insurance for Active Fishermen.

(b) to (d) The Central assistance is extended for these components of the scheme to the State/UTs on need basis on receipt of proposals, utilization certificate & progress report of funds released earlier, provision of matching State share and availability of funds under the scheme. Out of Rs. 20643.49 lakh released to all States/UTs during the IX and X Plan so far, Central assistance of Rs. 2605 lakh (12.62%) has been released to the Govt. of Kerala on receipt of proposals.

Crop Improvement Programme

1980. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any initiative in the area of research and development under crop improvement programme in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether sufficient funds have been made available therefore; if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?